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GENEVA CONFERENCE BULLETIN - I

In the brief opening session on 26 April, no substantive matters were discussed. It was agreed that the seating arrangements would be similar to that of the UN, with a slight change in the alphabetical sequence to permit the South Korean delegation to sit in front of the US, and the Chinese to sit in front of the USSR. Chairmanship will rotate among the heads of the Thailand, USSR and UK delegations, and five languages, including Chinese and Korean, will be official.

The proposal for the three-nation rotating chairmanship was suggested to Eden by Secretary Dulles, who asked Eden to serve for the Western powers in order to leave himself free of this burden.

At the second meeting on 27 April, North Korean Foreign Minister Nam Il proposed that unification be accomplished by (1) the formation of an all-Korean commission made up of representatives of both legislatures of the largest democratic organizations, and (2) the commission to formulate plans for the holding of free elections without foreign interference throughout all Korea and the implementing of an economic and cultural rapprochement. This is almost an exact duplicate of the proposals put forth in 1947, to which the Soviets attached conditions which would have assured a Communist victory.

Communists may seek restraints on President Rhee at Geneva: Several recent North Korean propaganda broadcasts suggest that the Communists at Geneva may seek an agreement placing restraints on President Rhee to prevent him from breaking the armistice. Broadcasts through 23 April have increasingly charged that Rhee, with American connivance, is planning to scuttle the talks and renew hostilities, a theme which contrasts with Pyongyang's de-emphasis of other aspects of the Korean issue. Such a guarantee might be demanded as part of a mutual troop withdrawal proposal not tied to any unification plan.

State Dept. review completed

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Big Three agree on membership for Indochina talks at Geneva: At a tripartite meeting on 24 April the British, French, and American secretaries of state agreed as an initial position to limit the Indochina phase of the Geneva conference to the Big Four plus Communist China and the three Associated States. To French Foreign Minister Bidault's suggestion that the three Indochinese states and the three bordering states be invited, British Foreign Secretary Eden replied that Australia would be "bothered by" its exclusion and the inclusion of Thailand and Burma.

Meanwhile, the American legation at Vientiane reports that the Laos government will follow the French lead at Geneva on condition that France or the great powers guarantee a Viet Minh withdrawal from Laos.

Viet Minh attendance at Geneva still uncertain: The Viet Minh role at Geneva is still subject to speculation. There are a number of [] reports, however, that assert the Viet Minh has sent, or will soon send, some of its top officials to the conference.

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